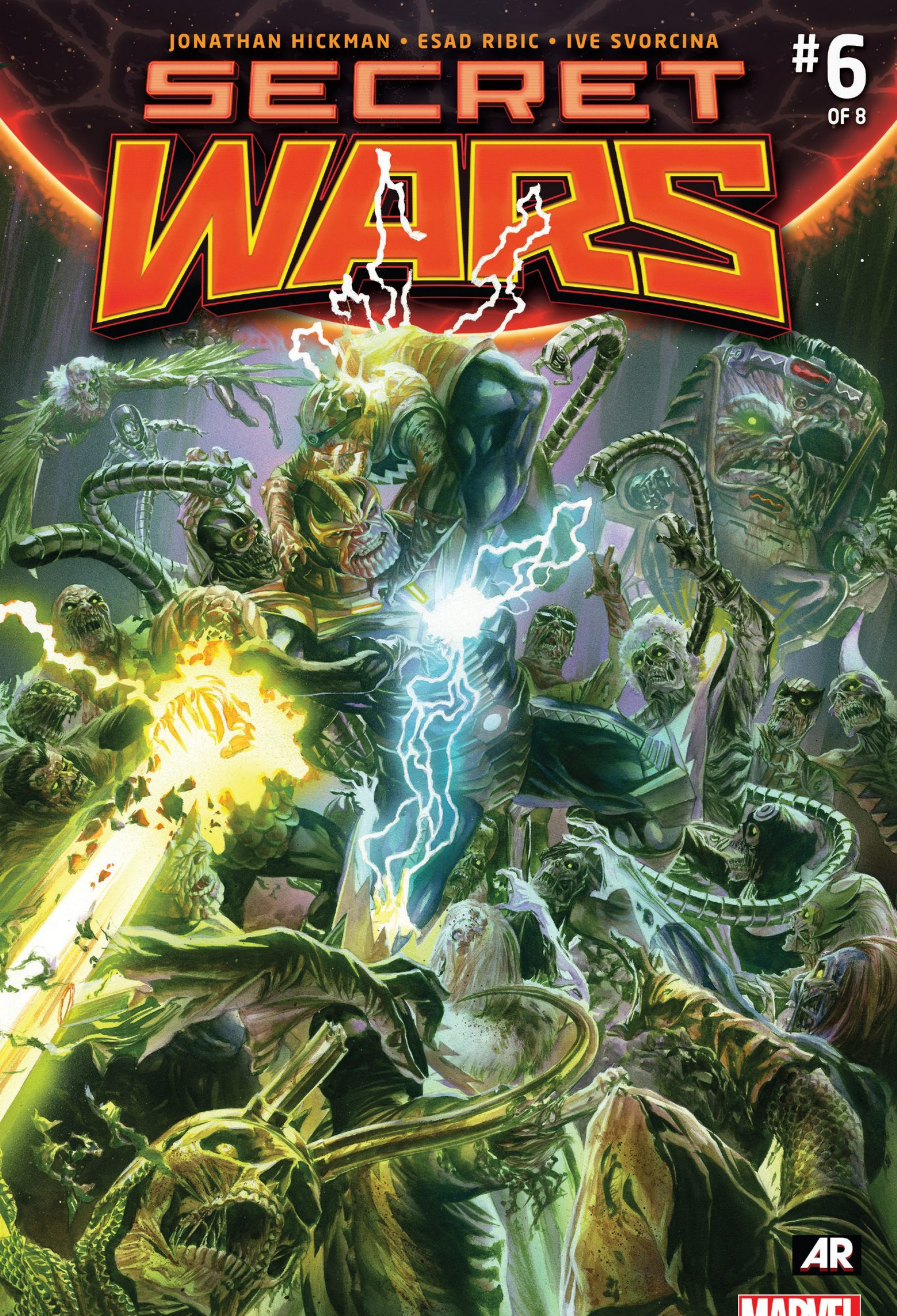
JONATHAN HICKMAN • ESAD RIBIC • IVE SVORCINA

SECRET WARS

#6
OF 8



AR

MARVEL

THREE WEEKS LATER

CASTLE DOOM.

I'LL BE HONEST, DAD...

I DON'T HAVE VERY GOOD NEWS.

MY WORLD IS IN DISARRAY, VALERIA. RECENT DISORDER HAS ESCALATED INTO OPEN REBELLION IN SEVERAL KINGDOMS.

IN THAT CHAOS MY THORS GROW WEARY, AND AN ILL WIND PORTENDS EVEN WORSE TO COME...NEVERTHELESS, I WOULD HAVE THE TRUTH FROM YOU, DAUGHTER...

AND I WOULD HAVE IT NOW.

OKAY, IF YOU SAY SO...

BASICALLY, THE SEARCH FOR THE REBELS WHO KILLED STEPHEN STRANGE HAS BEEN A FAILURE. EVEN IF WE'RE SUPER PATIENT, EXTRAPOLATING OUT THE LITTLE SUCCESS WE'VE HAD OVER A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME--

HONESTLY, DAD, OUR CHANCES PRETTY MUCH SUCK...

THE ONLY LUCK WE'VE HAD WAS APOCALYPSE STUMBLING ONTO THESE TWO SEVERAL DAYS AGO.

THE BARON AND HIS HORSEMEN DID QUITE A NUMBER ON THEM, BUT THEY WERE STILL INTACT ENOUGH FOR US TO GET A LOOK INSIDE THEIR HEADS.

FIRST WE FOUND OUT THAT THE BEAST MAN IS CALLED CORBIS. THE OTHER IS, APPARENTLY, HIS PROXY. THEN WE--

HOLD.

IS SHE CORRECT?

NO.

THEY ARE NOT COMPANIONS, THEY ARE HUSBAND AND WIFE. THE MALE IS *CORVUS GLAIVE.* SHE IS *PROXIMA MIDNIGHT.*

THEY ARE THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF *THE BLACK ORDER.* THE GENERALS OF THE TYRANT *THANOS.*

AR

I MUST SAY...

CONFESSION, MY LOVE, IS THE MANIFESTATION OF CONTRITION. IF THIS ONE HAS TRULY SEEN THE ERROR OF HER WAYS...

...WHY DO YOU HAVE TO ASK FOR INFORMATION THAT SHOULD BE FREELY GIVEN?

SHE WAS LOST, SUSAN.

THIS *BLACK SWAN* IS FROM ANOTHER WORLD. IT WILL TAKE HER TIME TO FIND HER WAY.

BUT YOU *WILL* FIND IT, WON'T YOU, CHILD?

I AM HOME, MY LORD.

ANNU ERSETU DAMIQ.

GOOD. AND IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU THINK WE SHOULD HEAR AT THIS TIME?

"THERE WAS THE BATTLE. WE WERE ALL THERE WITH YOU. AND THEN, SUDDENLY, WE WERE GONE.

"SCATTERED..."

I THEN MADE MY WAY HERE. I CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT CORVUS AND PROXIMA FOUND EACH OTHER.

OF THE REST...I DO NOT KNOW.

BUT YOU *DO* KNOW WHO THEY ARE?

SOME.

NOT ALL.

THEN TELL US WHAT YOU DO KNOW. TELL US ***WHO*** YOU--

FORGIVE ME, SUSAN, BUT THAT IS SECONDARY TO MY PRIMARY CONCERN. AT THE MOMENT, I ONLY CARE WHERE THESE REBELS ARE ***NOW*** AND THAT THEY ARE BROUGHT BEFORE ME.

TELL US, VALERIA...

DEEP IN THE RECESSES OF OUR CAPTIVES' MINDS, WAS THERE A KERNEL--SOME SLIVER--OF INFORMATION TELLING US WHERE THE OTHERS ARE?

DO WE KNOW ANYTHING OF THEIR PLANS?

I'M SORRY, FATHER...

NO.

WE HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THEY ARE. WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY'RE DOING.

SECRET WARS

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THE MULTIVERSE WAS DESTROYED.

•

TWO LIFE RAFTS ESCAPED THE FINAL COLLISION OF EARTH-616 AND EARTH-1610, CARRYING HEROES AND VILLAINS FROM BOTH REALITIES.

•

THE SURVIVORS AWAKENED ON BATTLEWORLD, A PLANET COMPOSED OF THE FRAGMENTS OF UNIVERSES THAT NO LONGER EXIST AND MAINTAINED BY THE IRON WILL OF ITS GOD AND MASTER, VICTOR VON DOOM – AND THE MOLECULE MAN, SECRETLY WIELDING THE STOLEN POWER OF THE BEYONDERS.

•

DOOM OFFERED THE INCURSION SURVIVORS A CHANCE TO SURRENDER. THEY REFUSED. BEFORE DOOM COULD DESTROY THEM, SHERIFF STRANGE SCATTERED THEM ACROSS BATTLEWORLD, A BETRAYAL WHICH COST HIM HIS LIFE.

•

DOOM'S DAUGHTER VALERIA HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH FINDING THE SURVIVORS, A TASK WHICH IS FORCING HER TO ASK SOME DANGEROUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF BATTLEWORLD...

06

WE RAISE THEM UP... JUST SO WE CAN PULL THEM DOWN.

CAST

BATTLEWORLD

GOD EMPEROR DOOM, RULER OF BATTLEWORLD

OWEN REECE, THE MOLECULE MAN

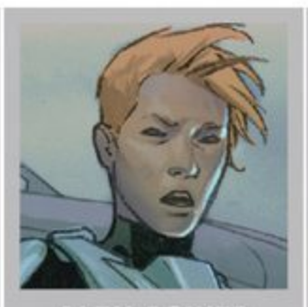
SUSAN STORM, ROYAL CONSORT

VALERIA, HEAD OF THE FOUNDATION

STEPHEN STRANGE, SHERIFF OF AGAMOTTO

THE FOUNDATION

FRANKLIN


ALEX POWER

DRAGON MAN

BENTLEY 23

NOSTRADAMUS

NIGHT MACHINE

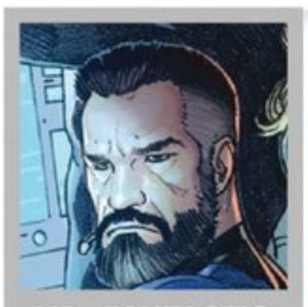
PSYCHO MAN

THORS

ENFORCERS OF DOOM'S JUSTICE

SURVIVORS OF THE FINAL INCURSION

THE LIFE RAFT


MR. FANTASTIC

BLACK PANTHER

CAPTAIN MARVEL

STAR-LORD

CYCLOPS/PHOENIX

SPIDER-MAN-616

SPIDER-MAN-1610

THOR

THE CABAL

THANOS

BLACK SWAN

TERRAX

NAMOR

PROXIMA MIDNIGHT

MAXIMUS

CORVUS GLAIVE

THE MAKER

THE FOUNDATION.

YOU GUYS GETTING THIS?

YEP. YOU'RE COMING IN LOUD AND CLEAR. HOW ARE THINGS ON THE GOD DADDY FRONT?

EVER GETTING THE FEELING YOU'RE BEING LIED TO?

NOT REALLY. NO.

THAT'S BECAUSE I'M AN AWESOME LIAR.

A *SUPER* LIAR, ACTUALLY. IT MIGHT BE MY BEST TRAIT.

YOU THINK?

I DON'T *KNOW...*

I COULD BE *LYYYING.*

IGNORE BENTLEY. YOU OKAY?

I'VE GOT SPIDERS IN MY HEAD, ALEX. I'M HAVING A HARD TIME IGNORING MY NORMAL INSTINCTS AND KEEPING MY NOSE FROM WHERE IT SHOULDN'T BE.

WELL, SPEAKING OF...

WE'VE HAD A BREAKTHROUGH IN OUR LITTLE EXPERIMENT.

YOU FINALLY FILTERED OUT THE BACKGROUND RADIATION OF THE PLANET AND FOUND THE SOURCE OF MY FATHER'S POWER?

UH-HUH.

WHERE?

YOU'RE STANDING ON IT.

OKAY. I GOTTA GO THEN. I'LL RE--

OH, HEY, WAIT! ONE FINAL INTERESTING ITEM...THE NIGHT MACHINE FOUND MORE OF THESE DRONE THINGS.

SIX THIS TIME.

13

WE ADDED THE NEW LOCATIONS IN WITH THE OTHERS WE FOUND. IT EXTRAPOLATES OUT TO A GEOMETRIC SEARCH PATTERN.

SOMEBODY'S LOOKING FOR SOMETHING.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

=SIGH=

WHO'S BUILDING THIS CRAP?

PROJECT 42. SOMEWHERE INSIDE BATTLEWORLD.

IF WE TREAT THIS SIMPLY AS A PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED...

...THEN I WOULD ARGUE THE QUESTION OF "*CAN WE*" MUST BE SECONDARY TO "*SHOULD WE.*"

Well, *I* would argue that you're ***wrong.***

The primary problem--our ***only*** problem--is finding a way to defeat Doom.

To that end, we need to locate a weakness. Some kind of crack in that heavenly armor of his.

AND IF WE DEFEAT HIM--

Oh, I mean to ***destroy*** him.

SEMANTICS. WHAT THEN HAPPENS TO THIS WORLD? ALL THAT REMAINS OF WHAT WAS...

DOES IT JUST FLY APART? SIMPLY CEASE TO EXIST? OR WOULD IT SOMEHOW REMAIN?

WE HAVE TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF DOOM.

THE PROPHET.

THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR SIDE PROJECTS?

Your premise is flawed, Reed. The belief that, no matter what, he's going to be able to hold it together...

Just look. I'm downloading the data from your probes now. The Prophet has raised an army--an endless legion of Doom deniers--that now marches towards his throne and the World Tree.

Maybe. It makes me wonder, if I confessed all of my secret plans, would you also tell me yours?

No. Of course you wouldn't...

Who could ever truly understand the machinations that go on inside that head of yours?

So...perhaps we should simply agree to focus on the problem that brought us together?

How to kill a god.

AND I TOLD YOU ALREADY...I'M NOT READY TO CONSIDER THAT.

You know, I look at your face...which is *my* face...and I see the age on it.

I wonder how it became so sentimental? So soft. So weak.

IT'S EASY, REED, WHEN YOU LEARN TO CARE ABOUT THINGS OTHER THAN YOURSELF.

You mean things like this?

CLICK!

OUR PROBLEM...

OUR PROBLEM... AS I SEE IT, IS DETERMINING HOW VICTOR CAME TO POSSESS SUCH POWER.

And how are we going to do that?

OH, A PLAN EXISTS...

"...I'VE GOT MY BEST PEOPLE WORKING ON IT."

CASTLE DOOM.

What's the gizmo say?

I DON'T THINK IT'S WORKING RIGHT...

IT SAYS IT'S OVER THERE SOMEWHERE, AROUND 60 TO 70 FEET IN THAT DIRECTION...BUT THE FOCAL POINT IS ABOUT 10 FEET DOWN.

WHICH DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

Right. Because there's a giant *statue* in the way.

IT COULD BE BURIED UNDERNEATH.

ACTUALLY, THERE'S A TRAPDOOR.

I FOUND IT EARLIER.

YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE SOURCE TOO, AREN'T YOU?

HOLY EVIL PLANS. THE RUMORS ARE TRUE...

IS THAT REALLY YOU, VAL?

AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW YOU?

IT'S ME. SPIDER-MAN. PETER.

HOW DID YOU KNOW WE WERE LOOKING FOR THE THING?

BECAUSE I WAS, TOO. I HAD MY PEOPLE WORKING ON FINDING THE SOURCE...BUT, I'M SORRY...I DON'T KNOW YOU.

HEY, LET ME SEE THAT!

UGH. OBVIOUSLY BUILT BY THE SAME PERSON WHO MADE THE DRONES. MIGHT AS WELL HAVE SIGNED THEIR NAME TO IT.

THIS IS EMBARRASSING. WHO BUILT THIS?

UH, REED RICHARDS.

NEVER HEARD OF HIM. DOESN'T MATTER. TELL HIM I SAID THIS IS SHODDY WORK AND HE SHOULD GET HIS ACT TOGETHER. OKAY?

...SURE.

SO ARE YOU COMING INSIDE WITH US?

I'VE SPENT THE LAST HOUR THINKING ABOUT IT, AND...NO. I DON'T THINK I'M GOING IN.

Why not?

BECAUSE I ALREADY HAVE SPIDERS IN MY HEAD. AND FINDING OUT THAT MY FATHER MIGHT NOT BE QUITE WHO HE SAYS HE IS WOULD BE, WELL...

LOOK, END OF THE DAY, I'M JUST A KID. I'M NOT EMOTIONALLY PREPARED FOR THAT KIND OF STUFF.

SO YOU GO ON WITHOUT ME. THE TRAPDOOR IS AT THE BASE OF THE STATUE.

OH, BUT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO ANSWER A COUPLE QUESTIONS IF YOU WANT ME TO KEEP THIS QUIET.

UH, SURE.

WERE YOU ON THE SHIP? THAT VESSEL WE FOUND?

ONE OF THEM. IT WAS A LIFE RAFT.

OKAY...AND NONE OF YOU FROM THE RAFT KILLED STEPHEN STRANGE, DID YOU?

NO. OF COURSE NOT.

RIGHT.

I DIDN'T THINK SO.

CAN YOU *FEEL* THAT?

TECTONIC PLATES GRINDING AT THE EDGES, LIKE PIECES FROM DIFFERENT PUZZLES TRYING TO FORM A SINGLE PICTURE, BUT THEY NEVER WILL.

UNDERSTAND? THEY DON'T *BELONG* TOGETHER.

IT'S GOING TO FLY APART...I KNOW IT IS. I DEVOURED EVERYTHING--I ATE IT ALL--BUT I'M STILL *HUNGRY.*

HELLOOO, SPIDER-MEN.

Who is--

OH, BOY. IT'S OWEN REECE. THE MOLECULE MAN.

THAT'S ME.

DID YOU BRING ME SOMETHING TO EAT?

I DIDN'T ACTUALLY KNOW THERE WOULD BE *SOMEONE* DOWN HERE...

I DIDN'T...I'M SORRY. NO, OWEN. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING.

Me eith--

Hey, wait...I forgot. I *do* have something.

There's a hamburger in my pocket.

I HAVE TO HAVE IT.

HOW DO YOU FORGET YOU HAVE A HAMBURGER IN YOUR POCKET?

We've been busy.

IT'S A *HAMBURGER.*

Hamburgers are what I like. Puberty is rough, Pete. I'm starving all day long. 'Cause I'm gonna be big.

NO, MILES. I MEAN, WHERE DID YOU GET IT? DON'T SAY YOUR POCKET.

From home. You know, my Earth.

SO YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT'S AN EIGHT-YEAR, THREE-WEEK-OLD HAMBURGER?

I don't think the suspended animation counts.

OKAY. SO THAT'S A THREE-WEEK-OLD HAMBURGER?

Yeah.

AND?

Oh, man. He shouldn't eat that.

OHHHH, SO GOOD.

UH, *MAYBE.* WE WERE SENT TO FIND THE SOURCE OF DOOM'S POWER. ALL I CAN SEE HERE IS A BIG WHITE ROOM.

ANY IDEA WHERE AROUND HERE WE MIGHT FIND THAT?

SO GOOD. AND NOW I FEEL MUCH BETTER--MOMENTARILY COLLECTED ENOUGH TO GUESS WHERE THIS IS HEADED...

YOU'RE FOLLOWING A CERTAIN TENDRIL. SPIDERS SCURRYING ALONG A VERY PARTICULAR WEB.

=BURP=

I'M RIGHT... AREN'T I?

OH, YES...

YOU'RE LOOKING AT HIM.

TELL ME, BARONESS PRYOR...

...WHAT DOES HE CALL HIMSELF?

THE PROPHET.

AND HE IS THE SOLE PERSON BEHIND THIS UPRISING? IF I LOOK CLOSELY, I WON'T FIND ONE OF YOU STANDING IN THE SHADOWS...PROPPING HIM UP?

IT PAINS ME THAT YOU THINK I MIGHT BE CAPABLE OF SUCH TREACHERY, MY LORD.

IS MY LOYALTY NOT APPARENT? IS MY LOVE NOT UNCONDITIONAL?

AND IF I WANTED YOUR THRONE, GOD, I WOULD TAKE IT.

THE MAESTRO HIDES FROM NO ONE.

IN MOMENTS LIKE THESE, THE LESS I SAY THE BETTER.

THIS PROPHET IS REAL. THIS UPRISING IS REAL.

HIS WORDS RING TRUE IN THE ABSENCE OF YOUR OWN, AND THEY HAVE SPREAD LIKE A FIRE THROUGH THE KINGDOMS.

"HE HAS RAISED AN ARMY--TWO DAYS AGO THE UPPER AND LOWER KINGDOMS FELL TO HIS MOB...

"AND IT GROWS AS HE HEADS THIS WAY. IGNORE HIM AT YOUR OWN PERIL, MY LORD."

I HOLD THE HEAVENS UP JUST SO THE EARTH CAN TREMBLE BENEATH ME.

DAMN YOU AGAIN, STEPHEN, FOR LEAVING ME WITH ALL THIS.

DO YOU HAVE MORE TO OFFER THAN DEFERENCE AND POSTURING, APOCALYPSE?

ONLY THE COUNSEL OF THE FIT, MY LORD. ONLY THE COUNSEL OF THE STRONG.

YOU ARE GOD, AND THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THOSE WHO SAY OTHERWISE IS AN OFFENSE. ONLY THE LOYAL SHOULD LIVE.

KILL THE REST.

I SEE. POWER STRUCTURES MUST BE MAINTAINED.

DOMINANCE MUST BE DISPLAYED. RAINING A LEGION OF THORS DOWN UPON THEM WOULD MEET YOUR APPROVAL, I SUPPOSE.

CERTAINLY. YOU *MUST* ACT.

I AGREE. BUT WHY WASTE MY MOST LOYAL AND MOST WORTHY ON A PRETENDER AND HIS MOB?

YOU DO IT. ALL OF YOU.

AND I WARN YOU, TARRY NOT...

...I AM LOSING WHAT LITTLE GRACE I STILL POSSESS.

WELL...THAT DID NOT GO AS PLANNED.

WHAT DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD DO?

I HAVE SOME IDEAS. BUT YOU FIRST.

BAR SINISTER.

OKAY, MY DEAR CAPTAIN. GOD DOOM WANTS ME TO SEND A FULL COMPLEMENT OF WARRIORS TO DISABUSE THESE NONBELIEVERS OF THEIR SINFUL WAYS.

I COULD SEND LESS. A PITTANCE PERHAPS?

CRACK

OR I COULD SEND EVERYONE.

BECAUSE I'M A GOOD, GOOD BOY.

WAIT... I'VE GOT IT NOW.

I KNOW WHAT WE SHOULD DO.

NOW YOU'RE TALKING.

LET'S BE NAUGHTY!

THE HIDDEN ISLE OF AGAMOTTO.

WE ONLY HAD TO CROSS THE WORLD SEA SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE WE FINALLY FOUND THE DOCTOR'S HIDDEN ISLE.

TELL ME, T'CHALLA, WHAT'S THE GREATER MIRACLE--THAT WE ACTUALLY FOUND IT, OR THAT WE FOUND IT WITHOUT KILLING ONE ANOTHER?

THE ENORMITY OF WHAT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH... OF ALL THAT LED TO THIS...

I THINK I EVENTUALLY REALIZED THAT THERE WAS NO AVOIDING WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR WORLD.

YOU'RE A KING OF ASHES NOW, NAMOR. I AM KING OF THE DEAD...THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO FIGHT OVER.

NOTHING BEHIND US...AND ONLY THIS NEW WORLD BEFORE US.

IT'S JUST A *DOOR*, T'CHALLA.

AND A LOCKED ONE AT THAT.

YOU FORGET...

STEPHEN LEFT US A KEY.

KKK

KRRMM

AND WHATEVER MIGHT BE HIDDEN INSIDE.

GREETINGS, TRAVELER.

IF YOU HAVE FOUND THIS--MY SANCTUM SANCTORUM--IT MEANS YOU HAVE BRAVED THE WORLD SEA, THE GREAT LEVIATHAN HORDE, AND THE HIDDEN ISLE ITSELF...

IT ALSO MEANS THAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR POSSESSION THE KEY OF AGAMOTTO, WHICH COULD HAVE ONLY PASSED FROM MY DYING HAND INTO YOURS.

BUT WAS IT GIVEN FREELY? OR WAS IT TAKEN WITHOUT MERIT? THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION WILL DETERMINE MY TRUE INTENT: TELL ME, TRAVELER, DO YOU KNOW THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE WORLD?

MEMENTO MORI?

ILLUMINATUS.

GOOD.

I HOPE MY PASSING WAS OF CONSEQUENCE.

SOME THINGS--SUCH AS MY KNOWLEDGE OF THIS WORLD GOD DOOM AND I BUILT TOGETHER--WILL BE LOST FOREVER...

BUT SOME MAY BE PASSED ON.

BZZZT

AS SUCH, I LEAVE TO YOU ALL THE ITEMS OF TRUE SIGNIFICANCE THAT I OWN...

OF WHICH THERE ARE ONLY TWO.

THE FIRST IS ONE OF THE FEW ARTIFACTS THAT TRANSCENDS THE PATCHWORK NATURE OF THIS PLANET. THE ***SIEGE COURAGEOUS*** IS AN OBJECT OF POWER THAT WILL TRANSPORT YOU ANYWHERE YOU WISH TO GO...

AS WELL AS TRANSFORM THE TRAVELER IN A MANNER BEFITTING THEIR TRUE P[illegible]L

MY GOD.

WHAT IS IT?

THE SECOND ITEM IS GEOGRAPHICALLY RESTRICTED TO DOOMSTADT. HOME TO CASTLE DOOM, THE WORLD TREE AND GOD HIMSELF.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW THAT THIS WORLD HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED FROM THE SURVIVING REMNANTS OF WORLDS DESTROYED IN THE MULTIVERSAL COLLAPSE.

EACH SECTION IS A SLICE OF A SINGLE NATIVE UNIVERSE. WHICH IS WHY WHEN I FOUND ONE CONTAINING ALL THE GEMS, I MADE SURE THAT CASTLE DOOM WAS BUILT IN THAT SECTION.

I LEAVE TO YOU MY MOST PRECIOUS POSSESSION...

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

DON'T LOOK AT ME. WE BOTH KNOW I CAN'T BE TRUSTED.

AN INFINITY GAUNTLET.

USE IT WISELY, AND IF YOU MUST, USE IT QUICKLY...

FOR IT JUST MAY BE THE ONLY THING ON THIS WORLD WITH WHICH ONE CAN SMITE GOD.

FRANKLIN!

TIME FOR BED!

COMING, MOM.

DID YOU HAVE A GOOD DAY?

YEAH. GALACTUS AND I WENT FISHING AND CAUGHT A LEVIATHAN. WE EVEN SAW AN ENTIRE SCHOOL OF THEM!

REALLY?

YEAH. I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT MANY SO CLOSE TO THE SHORE. IT WAS INSANE.

HEY, MOM.

UH-HUH.

WILL YOU TELL ME A STORY BEFORE I GO TO BED?

I'D LOVE TO. ANY REQUESTS?

I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT *THE FANTASTIC FOUR.*

I'VE TOLD YOU THAT ONE A THOUSAND TIMES, FRANKLIN.

YEAH. I KNOW. BUT I'M SCARED ONE DAY I'LL FORGET IF YOU STOP TELLING IT.

"OKAY. ONE MORE TIME...

"THERE WERE FOUR OF US. IT WAS ME, MY BROTHER, JONATHAN, OUR FRIEND, BEN GRIMM, AND OUR FATHER... DOCTOR FRANKLIN STORM.

"WE WENT ON WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS GOING TO BE AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY, BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG AND OUR SHIP CRASHED TO THE EARTH.

"BUT SOMETIMES, FRANKLIN, FAILING IS JUST THE FIRST STEP IN AN UNEXPECTED, AND EVEN AMAZING, ADVENTURE.

"WE WERE ***CHANGED.*** ALL OF US. EMPOWERED, WE BECAME HEROES AND PROTECTED EARTH.

"BUT THEN, ONE DAY, THAT WORLD ENDED...

"AND THE WORLD WE'RE IN NOW BEGAN."

AND THAT'S WHEN YOU MET DAD.

THAT'S WHEN HE SAVED US.

"WHEN IT WAS FORGED, THIS WORLD WAS A FRIGHTENING PLACE. A DARK AND DANGEROUS TIME.

"IT WAS NIGHT, AND ALL THAT SEEMED TO EXIST WAS WAR. THAT WAS WHEN YOUR GRANDFATHER DIED...

"AND WE WOULD HAVE DIED AS WELL..."

BUT THERE WAS A LIGHT. BRILLIANT AND BLINDING...

IT WAS YOUR FATHER.

"HE MADE A WORLD FROM NOTHING.

"HE MADE A WORLD THAT WAS *EVERYTHING.*

"THAT WAS THE DAY THE FANTASTIC FOUR DIED AND WAS REPLACED WITH SOMETHING BETTER.

"YOUR FATHER HELPED ME BURY MY FATHER AND THEN TOGETHER WE BROUGHT ORDER TO THIS WORLD.

"YOUR UNCLE JOHNNY EVEN BECAME THE SUN SO THERE WOULD BE LESS NIGHT."

BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO UNCLE BEN? YOU NEVER SAY.

BECAUSE THAT, YOUNG MAN, IS ANOTHER STORY FOR ANOTHER DAY.

FOR WHEN YOU ARE OLDER.

THE SHIELD. DETENTION LEVEL.

YOUR STORY'S CRAP, PAL. YOU WANNA HEAR A *REAL* STORY? I'LL TELL YA A TRUE ONE...

IT'S ABOUT A GUY WHO HAD TO LEAVE THE ONLY FAMILY HE EVER HAD BEHIND BECAUSE GOD NEEDED SOMEONE TO KEEP THE NIGHTMARES OUT.

SO I SAID GOODBYE TO SUE AND JOHNNY, AND BECAME THE SHIELD SO THE WORLD COULD HAVE SOME SORTA *PEACE.* SOME SORTA *CHANCE.*

AND NOW YOU'RE HERE TELLIN' ME THAT IT AIN'T BEEN WORTH IT?

YES.

I'M TELLING YOU THAT YOUR GOD PUT YOU HERE TO KEEP YOU OUT OF THE WAY. BECAUSE HE FEARS YOU.

JUST AS HE FEARED THE TORCH AND CAST HIM OUT AS WELL.

YOU SEE, I KNOW A SECRET.

I KNOW WHO YOU REALLY ARE, BEN GRIMM. YOU ARE WARRIOR... A HERO...

"AND WHERE I AM FROM, YOU ARE THE CLOSEST FRIEND OF DOOM'S GREATEST ENEMY. YOU HAVE SHAMED HIM TIME AND TIME OVER.

"DOOM IS A PETTY USURPER OF POWERS FAR GRANDER THAN HIMSELF.

"SPEAKING AS ONE WHO HAS FELT THE UNIVERSE WRITHE IN HIS CLENCHED FIST, THIS POWER SHOULD NOT BE LEFT TO A MORTAL SUCH AS HE."

YOU SAYIN' NONE OF THIS IS THE REAL DEAL?

THE WHOLE OF BATTLEWORLD IS JUST A BIG LOAD OF BALONEY?

NO. IT'S REAL. IT'S AS REAL AS ANYTHING.

IT'S JUST NOT REALITY AS IT SHOULD BE.

DOOM CONVINCED YOU TO LIVE ON YOUR KNEES. EVERY DAY OF THIS LIFE, HE'S BEATEN YOU AS YOU LIE THERE.

THIS IS A PAINFUL, HEARTLESS TRUTH. AND IT BEGS ONE QUESTION: ARE YOU JUST GOING TO DIE HERE...

TR TR RRRRRUMBLE

"...OR ARE YOU GOING TO STAND UP?"

TO BE CONTINUED...

SECRET WARS

LAST DAYS

SILVER SURFER #14

MS. MARVEL #18

BATTLEWORLD

AGE OF ULTRON VS. MARVEL ZOMBIES #4

RUNAWAYS #4

STAR-LORD AND KITTY PRYDE #3

GHOST RACERS #4

SECRET WARS JOURNAL #5

INHUMANS: ATTILAN RISING #5

SIEGE #3

RED SKULL #3

THORS #3

WARZONES!

AGE OF APOCALYPSE #3 & 4

CIVIL WAR #4

HAIL HYDRA #3

SPIDER-ISLAND #3 & 4

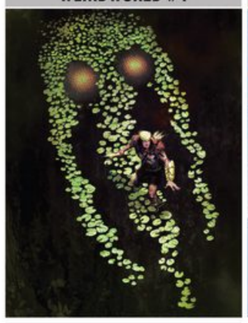
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN: RENEW YOUR VOWS #5

A-FORCE #4

GIANT-SIZE LITTLE MARVEL: AVX #4

SQUADRON SINISTER #3

WEIRDWORLD #4



1872 #3

ARMOR WARS #5

X-MEN 92 #4 (PRINT) X-MEN 92 #8 (INFINITE)

FUTURE IMPERFECT #5

YEARS OF FUTURE PAST #5

MRS. DEADPOOL AND THE HOWLING COMMANDOS #4

X-TINCTION AGENDA #4

OLD MAN LOGAN #5

E IS FOR EXTINCTION #4

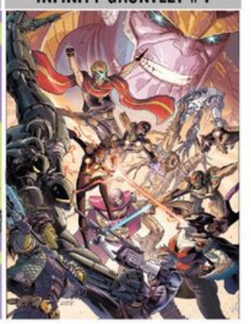
CAPTAIN MARVEL & THE CAROL CORPS #4

KORVAC SAGA #4

GUARDIANS OF KNOWHERE #4

M.O.D.O.K. ASSASSIN #5

INFINITY GAUNTLET #4



INFERNO #5

SECRET WARS 2099 #5

PLANET HULK #5

SPIDER-VERSE #5

HOUSE OF M #2 & #3

NEXT...